



Devils River State Natural Area

Access Permit for Paddlers

Overview

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) acquired the Devils River State Natural Area (DRSNA) in 1988. In December 2010, TPWD acquired additional acreage approximately 13 river miles downriver from the original SNA. The 20,000-acre original SNA is designated as DRSNA –Del Norte. The newly acquired 17,000-acre lower river unit will be known as DRSNA –Big Satan.

The Areas of DRSNA:

Del Norte Unit has been opened to the public since the early 1990s with very limited public access to the Devils River itself. During this time, “non-motorized access only” has been allowed to the river through the SNA (except for limited concessionaire shuttle access), with a gate preventing motorized access for the last mile to the river. The SNA access road meets the river at a location known as San Pedro Point. Del Norte encompasses one mile of river frontage. The San Pedro Point Paddler Camp offers primitive camping for paddlers who are moving down the river. There are 16 individual paddler camping spots and a reservation is required. Day use (no camping) is also authorized at this site for visitors hiking or biking to the river.

Big Satan Unit is not presently open to public use, except for permit-holding paddlers. Planning is underway to determine public use and an opening date.

Paddlers using the Del Norte and Big Satan Units are required to obtain a Devils River SNA Access Permit, and are expected to review and abide by the rules of behavior set forth in the permit while on the Devils River SNA. **All property adjacent to the Devils River, except for the Baker’s Crossing bridge, the units of the Devils River SNA and Lake Amistad National Recreation Area (approximately 47 miles) are privately owned. Paddlers leaving the riverbed may be trespassing and subject to prosecution.**

TPWD has authorized a limited number of permits for paddler access at Del Norte-San Pedro Point, and at Big Satan-Devils Back.

Devils River SNA Access Permits (DRSNAAP’s): TPWD will issue up to 12 individual river access permits each day for the public to access to and/or from the river across TPWD-managed lands for overnight trips. Additionally, 12 individual permits will also be issued for day trips originating from the Del Norte or Big Satan units (trips to be completed in one day, no overnight). Any paddler accessing the Devils River SNA-Del Norte Unit (San Pedro Point), DRSNA-Big Satan Unit (Devils Back), or who have launched from private property or Baker’s Crossing, and are accessing the shores of the Del Norte or Big Satan Units from the river, or who have launched from private property or Baker’s Crossing and who are staying at the San Pedro Point paddler campground must have a **DRSNAAP in their possession**. These permits are available by reservation only and can be obtained through the Texas State Park’s Customer Service Center.

Shuttle Service Providers: TPWD-approved concessionaire shuttle service providers are authorized to provide shuttle service for paddlers wishing to put in or take out at San Pedro Point or Devils Back. They are also allowed to provide shuttle service to paddlers wishing to put in at Baker’s Crossing.

Camping:

Baker's Crossing Paddler Camp: A small primitive camping area approximately 0.25 of a mile south of the Baker's Crossing bridge, on the southwest side of SH 163, is available for paddlers the night before their launch. There is a picnic table, no fires are allowed, and all trash must be removed. Only containerized fuel may be used at the site.

Del Norte Unit - San Pedro Point Paddlers Camp: Camping is allowed at San Pedro Point Paddler Camp in the Del Norte Unit. This is a "paddler's only" camp, and there is a one-night maximum stay limitation. Reservations are required, and there is a \$5 per night, per person camping fee. Maximum capacity of this campsite is sixteen users.

Big Satan Unit - River Mile (RM) 29 Paddler's Camp: A primitive paddler's camp is available at river mile 29 for up to 8 paddlers, one night only maximum stay, and \$5 per night per person. A reservation is required. More than one paddling group (up to a total of 8 individual paddlers) may use this campsite at the same time.

These three sites are the only designated public campsites on the river at this time. Camping permits for Del Norte and Big Satan are available through the Texas State Parks Customer Service Center. Camping at Baker's Crossing is first-come, first-served. Camping at Lake Amistad is managed by the National Park Service (NPS), please contact NPS with any questions. **All other camping must be below the gradient boundary, on an island, or with permission from a private landowner.**

Planning your trip down the Devils River: It is highly recommended that any person considering paddling the Devils River review the Devils River State Natural Area web page (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/devils-river>) and specific details about paddling the river from the related web page, "Preparing for a Trip on the Devils River," and other publications/Web pages on the subject, prior to obtaining a DRSNAAP.

Anyone utilizing the San Pedro Point or Devils Back campgrounds must have a DRSNAAP and must, while on either unit of the DRSNA, follow the "Critical Paddlers Information" requirements, which are available on the TPWD website (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/devils-river/river-trip-guidelines>).

Permit Conditions:

- Waste Alleviation and Gelling Bags (WAG Bags) should be carried and used by paddlers. All human waste should be removed from the river corridor and disposed of in a proper receptacle.
- All trash/garbage should be carried out in a heavy-duty bag or container that will not rip or spill garbage into the river, and disposed of in a proper receptacle.
- Glass containers are strongly discouraged on the river, and are prohibited in the river campgrounds of the DRSNA.
- Paddlers should carry adequate line/rope/cord to secure gear in/on vessel. All gear should be secured well enough to prevent spilling out when the vessel rolls over.
- Each vessel must attach and display an identifying boat band supplied by TPWD while on Devils River SNA properties.
- If you are taking a trip not supported by a shuttle service, deposit a copy of this completed permit and itinerary in the receptacle at the Baker's Crossing or San Pedro Point put-in locations.

Permitting Procedure: To obtain a DRSNAAP call the Texas State Park's **Central Reservation Center** at 512-389-8901 and **ask for the Devils River agent**.

Paddlers should ask the agent if there are DRSNAAPs available for the date for which the paddler(s) wish to put-in. Twelve individual overnight permits and twelve day-use permits are available each day. The permit numbers for overnight permits are counted based on launches each day with intent to camp. Paddlers launching from private property who are going to use a TPWD campsite or take-out site will be counted the day they actually launch from the private property or Baker's Crossing.

Permits may be obtained for up to 11 months in advance and **cost \$10 each**. Each paddler will need an individual DRSNAAP, though a trip leader may reserve and pay for an entire group. Once the reservation is made and the DRSNAAP purchased, it will become non-refundable after 72 hours.

The DRSNAAP will be mailed to the permit holder. If the paddler is not using a TPWD Shuttle Service Provider, an identifying boat band will also be mailed with the permit, with instruction on attachment.

If a TPWD Shuttle Service Provider will be used for shuttle to the river access, the Shuttle Service Provider will supply the identifying boat band.

General Advice: Once the paddler has reviewed all Critical Paddler Information and other necessary information about paddling the Devils River, they should decide their logistics of how they will get to the river and where they will launch and get picked up.

If a paddler (or one of the party) is an experienced Devils River paddler, then the group probably knows what to do as far as planning the support logistics of the trip. If a paddler(s) is new to the Devils River, and wants to consider shuttle service support to and from the river, they should contact a TPWD authorized Shuttle Service Provider **before** obtaining their DRSNAAP to ensure that the Shuttle Service is available on the dates planned for the trip. They will also want to contact the TPWD Central Reservation Center prior to making a commitment with the Shuttle Service Provider to ensure that DRSNAAPs are available on the date desired to launch. This process will take at least three phone calls. Once the pilot project has been completed, TPWD hopes to have a web-based DRSNAAP process.

Leaving a vehicle unattended at Baker's Crossing is not recommended. A personal drop-off/pick-up or a Shuttle Service Provider drop-off/pick-up is the recommended manner in which to paddle the Devils River.

TPWD-authorized Shuttle Service Provider(s): At this time the following TPWD-sanctioned Shuttle Service Provider(s) are authorized to utilize put-in/take-out points at Del Norte-San Pedro Point; and Big Satan-Devils Back. They are also allowed to utilize the put-in point at Baker's Crossing.